

July 15th, 2018
"Upheld by God's Righteous Right Hand"
 Isaiah 41:8-16

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

July 8 Psalms 119:89-176	July 12 Psalms 146-150
July 9 Psalms 120-132	July 13 Proverbs 1-3
July 10 Psalms 133-139	July 14 Proverbs 4-6
July 11 Psalms 130-145	July 15 Proverbs 7-9

Lesson Introduction: As we move to chapter 41, we continue to consider the coming Babylonian captivity. In **verses 1-7**, we hear of **"one from the east"** that the Lord will raise up. This is a prophesy concerning Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, who the Lord would use in 539 B.C. to conquer Babylon, thus allowing some of the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem. **Verses 5-7** speak specifically of how the nations of the world would react to such a powerful ruler conquering who he pleases. Ultimately, we see that the world responds by trying to find strength in each other, and the things they can fashion with their own hands. However, in contrast to this worldly reaction, we see in **Verses 8-16** how the people of God are upheld not by the powers of men, but by the **"righteous right hand"** of God Almighty. We will spend our time this week examining these verses, as we consider how **salvation is brought about by God, salvation is sustained by God, and salvation leads to joy in God.**

Key Memory Verse: Isaiah 41:10

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- Salvation is brought about by God (V. 8-9)
- Salvation is sustained by God (V. 10-16)
- Salvation results in our joy in God (V. 16)

Isaiah 41:8-16

8 But you, Israel, my servant,
 Jacob, **whom I have chosen**,
 the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth,
 and called from its farthest corners,
 saying to you, "You are my servant,
 I have chosen you and not cast you off";

10 fear not, for I am with you;

be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11 Behold, all who are incensed against you
 shall be put to shame and confounded;
 those who strive against you
 shall be as nothing and shall perish.

12 You shall seek those who contend with you,
 but you shall not find them;
 those who war against you
 shall be as nothing at all.

13 For I, the Lord your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Fear not,
I am the one who helps you."

14 Fear not, you worm Jacob,
you men of Israel!
I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord;
your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

15 Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge,
 new, sharp, and having teeth;
 you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,
 and you shall make the hills like chaff;

16 you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them
 away,
 and the tempest shall scatter them.
And you shall rejoice in the Lord;
in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

Salvation is Brought About by God (V. 8-9)

-What do these verses tell us about how the nation of Israel was created and came to be the people of God?

-What merits did Abraham possess to be chosen by God and called His friend?

Note: Imagine how downcast and hopeless the people of God must have felt... They have been oppressed by the Egyptians and Assyrians, and now they are hearing that Babylonian Captivity is imminent. Of course, all of this is due to their rebellion against God. You might think that God would tell them to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and get their act together. However, the way God decides to comfort them is by reminding them that they are a **"chosen"** people. He points to the fact that

Abraham was called His friend, and how He chose him to start the nation of Israel. It is important we understand who Abraham was **before** the Lord chose him. **Joshua 24:2** tells us that Abraham and his family “**lived beyond the Euphrates... and they served other gods.**” Abraham had no merits of his own to make himself worthy of God’s election, but God was gracious to him, and chose him to be the father of His people.

These verses are meant to remind Israel that their hope is not in themselves, but in the God who chose them! In order for Israel to truly have hope, they needed to realize that their future was based ultimately on God’s will, and not their finite and fickle wills, and so He reminds them, “**I have chosen you.**” Just as the Israelites were chosen by the will of God, so are all who are in Christ (**Ephesians 1:4**). Our salvation is not simply an offer from God that we have accepted by our intellect or virtue (**Romans 8:7, Romans 9:16**), but completely the work of Him in us, to call us to Himself, grant us faith and repentance, and save us by His grace (**Romans 8:29-30, Ephesians 1:4-14, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7, 2 Timothy 2:25, 1 Peter 1:3**). Praise God that He did not leave our salvation up to us, because if He had, we would have chosen the path leading to death (**Proverbs 14:12, Romans 3:10-18**). Rather, He has chosen us by His grace, and in that, we can have certain hope!

Discussion Section 2: Salvation is Sustained by God (V. 10-16)

- What do these verses tell us about how the people of God will be upheld?
- How does God go about strengthening and upholding us?
- Do you ever have fears about losing your salvation?
- If salvation is brought about completely by God, why do we sometimes begin to feel like it can be lost by an act of our will?

Note: In our first section we see that God reminds His people that they were chosen by Him. He then begins to assure them that they will be **kept** by Him. As world powers such as Cyrus the Great, and later, the Roman Empire, continue to arise, it would have been easy for the people of God to simply lose hope, and feel as if their status as God’s people had simply been lost because of their rebellion and weakness. God reminds them that it is not their strength that will sustain them, but His.

Just as the Israelites needed reminding that God is not only the God that brought about their salvation, but also the God that sustains it, so we need to be reminded daily that it is only by His power that we walk in righteousness and good works (**Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:12-13, Jude 24-25**). God did not save us and leave us. We are not in danger of being seated in the heavenly places today (**Ephesians 2:6**) and slipping out of grace and into hell tomorrow. Those He saves, He seals and keeps (**John 10:28-29, Romans 8:31-39, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Peter 1:5**). These truths always lead to questions about those who seemed to at one point have a genuine conversion experience, only to then go on living a sinful life, or later altogether rejecting Christ. However, these cases should not cast doubt about our eternal security, as the Scriptures speak plainly about them, making it clear that all those who renounce their faith in Christ never genuinely had it to begin with (**1 John 2:19**), and that those who live their lives making a practice of sinning have never truly been saved to begin with (**1 John 3:4-10**). Ultimately, the Scriptures give us great assurance that God will work in us, by the power of His Spirit, to cause us to walk in holiness, and keep us for Himself for all eternity.

Discussion Section 3: Salvation Leads to Joy in God (V. 16)

- What does the end of **V. 16** tell us about what our salvation results in?
- What is the ultimate prize of our salvation?
- How do you rejoice and glory in the Lord daily?

Note: Ultimately, the benefit of Christ’s death and resurrection, and God’s gracious salvation to us is not that we will go to heaven one day, or get to have our own mansion, or get to see our loved ones who have gone before us, but rather, that we might have joy in God (**1 Corinthians 4:6, 1 Peter 3:18**). Knowing God through Christ is the only true source of joy in this universe. All of creation is meant to point us to joy in Him (**Psalms 19:1, Romans 1:20**). This week, may we consider the fact that He has graciously chosen us and minute by minute sustains us, and may these truths stir up in us overwhelming rejoicing and glorying in “**the Holy One of Israel!**”